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GALABA

THE NEED FOR GROUP RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

James J. Galaba
Resource Officer
Winema National Forest
Klamath Ranger District

Clemson Class of 1986

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James J. Galaba
Resource Officer
Winema National Forest
Klamath Ranger District
1936 California Avenue
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601
503-883-6824

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AUTHOR: James J. Galaba
Resource Officer
Winema National Forest
Klamath Ranger District
1936 California Avenue
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601
(503) 883-6824

TITLE: The Need for Group Recreation Opportunities

ABSTRACT: An increase in requests for group recreation opportunities and facilities is occurring on the Klamath Ranger District of the Winema National Forest. Requests are for overnight camping, accommodation of equestrian groups and expansion of winter sports opportunities.

The repetitiveness of these requests suggests an assessment should be made for group recreation needs. A social change or trend in the manner that people live and recreate could be occurring that would have pronounced implications for recreation management on National Forest lands.

The objectives of this paper are to determine if requests for group recreation opportunities represent a significant social change that could affect management of National Forests for recreation and to clarify the needs for group recreation opportunities on the Klamath Ranger District.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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AUTHOR: James J. Galaba
Resource Officer
Klamath Ranger District
Winema National Forest
1936 California Avenue
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601
(503) 883-6824

SUMMARY: The intent of this project is to analyze the growth of requests for group recreation opportunities on the Klamath Ranger District. The analysis addresses two basic objectives; to determine if there is a social trend towards group activity that the Forest Service must consider in recreation management and to identify opportunities for group recreation that can be provided on the Klamath Ranger District.

The basic effort in this study was conducting research for evidence that there is a tendency for people to increasingly associate in groups as opposed to an inclination towards solitude and disengagement. The findings were used to suggest a management approach for the Forest Service to use. Other aspects of this study involved verification of requests for group recreation opportunities and determination of developable site specific opportunities on the Klamath Ranger District.

It was difficult to determine a social trend or change towards group association. This was because evidence is lacking in studies of this subject. However, investigation revealed that there are some basic needs for people to affiliate (in groups) based on common interests. This need does not appear to be very well recognized in the formulation of Forest Service policy for management of outdoor recreation opportunities. Also, groups often form in response to agency action or inaction that they see as adverse to their interests. The organizational strength of these groups is reinforced by member's common interest and affiliation. Likely to follow is a demand for facilities and consideration to serve their group recreation needs.

There is a definite public desire for a variety of group recreation opportunities on the Klamath Ranger District. Recommendations are made to develop facilities to support at least three different group needs. It is also recommended that the Forest Service foster group contacts to assist in planning and management of outdoor recreation opportunities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ii
Chapter 1, INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter 2, LITERATURE REVIEW	3
Chapter 3, METHODOLOGY	5
Chapter 4, DISCUSSION	7
Chapter 5, SUMMARY	11

Chapter 1, INTRODUCTION

This project is a study of the need for outdoor recreation opportunities for people in groups. In order to avoid confusion in terminology, the term group is defined as a collection of between 10 and 100 people. Most often the size of the recreating group being considered or referenced is between 15 and 30 people.

During the 1980's there was a noticeable increase in requests for group recreation opportunities on the Klamath Ranger District of the Winema National Forest. At the same time there was an increase in interest from established recreation clubs, such as snowmobilers, concerning Forest Service management decisions that affected their favored recreation activities.

Requests are for facilities or opportunities or both. But there also appears to be a concern that Forest Service management is adversely affecting the opportunities for people to recreate in groups.

Currently, available opportunities for group recreation are limited on the district. There is only one day use site (picnic) designed and available for groups. Large areas of the district including most of the summer trail system are within wilderness. Requirements for protection and managing wilderness often preclude use by larger groups.

Specific examples of interest in group recreation are:

1. Campground hosts and field personnel report a consistent request for developed camping facilities for groups at the Lake of the Woods recreation area. There appears to be an increasing trend in these types of requests.
2. Requests from equestrian groups for facilities, trails and areas to accommodate their participation as a group in trail riding and camping activities.
3. Requests from winter sports groups, specifically skiers and snowmobilers, for facilities generally suitable for use by large groups involved in winter recreation.
4. In response to changes introduced by Forest Service management, groups formed to advocate their recreation interest.
 - a. Various winter sports groups organized to lobby for their wants when changing location of winter trails caused conflict between skiers and snowmobilers.
 - b. Equestrian groups organized when it appeared that the Forest Service was limiting their opportunities through reconstruction and wilderness management.

The growth of group recreation requests stimulates several questions in regard to provision and management of outdoor recreation activities.

1. Does the growth of requests for group recreation opportunities represent a significant social change or trend that may affect how people will desire to recreate?
2. If a social change is occurring, what are the implications for the agency recreation management program?
3. What are the opportunities to be gained by the agency in addressing group recreation needs and requests?
4. How should the Klamath Ranger District manage requests for group recreation opportunities?

The purpose of this study is to:

1. Determine if group recreation activity is an increasing trend that should be considered in recreation management.
2. Develop recommendations for management for group recreation opportunities on the Klamath Ranger District.

Chapter 2, LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was conducted in three generalized subject areas: Sociology, Political Science and Human Recreation. There were few references discovered that considered this exact type of inquiry. A few authors briefly wrote on this subject as part of broader works in sociology. Alvin Zander considers the formation of groups more than other authors that were researched. He has studied and written on groups and organizations since 1953, often in cooperation with Dorwin Cartwright. Marvin Shaw has also contributed some thought on this subject in his writings on the psychology of small group behavior.

Cartwright and Zander in 1968 identified three attractions for group membership:

1. Attainment of individual goals through membership.
2. Activities of the group are sought by the individual member.
3. Almost all groups provide the opportunity for people to satisfy needs that can be satisfied only by personal relationships with other people.

Shaw (1931) speculated that people join groups to meet some individual need. He specifically identified that groups provide:

1. A means to perform tasks that only groups can accomplish.
2. Satisfaction of a human need for personal affiliations with other people.
3. Friendship or interpersonnal attraction based upon a reinforcement of interest.

He also referenced later works of Cartwright and Zander that elaborated on personal attraction related to goals, activities and benefits of membership of groups.

Alvin Zander (1985) discusses conditions that foster group formation. His position is that circumstances stimulate individuals to organize to improve benefits to selves and others especially where a situation requires the efforts of several people to resolve. He identifies four conditions ("triggers") that should exist for group formation.

1. Certain opportunities or unsatisfactory conditions exist.
2. Organizers can conceive a more satisfactory and attainable situation.
3. Members believe that they will achieve a more satisfactory situation through group activity.
4. Conditions in the community encourage formation of active groups.

He describes several observed situations that caused groups of concerned citizens to form. Among them were the undesirable actions of a large organization (most instances), individuals having similar personal needs for help, the ineffectiveness of a large organization and a larger organization needing assistance.

No usable references were found from a review of literature in political science. Studies in recreation were equally scarce in this subject area.

James Murphy (1975) compares American society from what he feels that it is to its potential. He contends that America is recognized as a "mass society" as exemplified by alienation, moral fragmentation, disengagement and regimentation of its people. He contrasts this situation to what it could be in the sense of a community where members identify with the group, have moral unity, are involved and regard others in the group as having worth.

The Forest Service Manual was reviewed for policy direction concerning provision of recreation opportunities oriented towards groups. Group recreation is apparently considered within a broader context of recreation opportunity. Manual policy emphasizes the concept that recreation opportunities should relate to those recreation activities that require a large land base and natural environment. There does appear to be a bias, particularly in wilderness management, towards providing solitude and other attributes that are more suited for recreation activity by individuals, single families or groups of less than 10 people. The emphasis is on providing opportunities towards the primitive end of the recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) where standards imply less people can recreate to achieve a desired experience.

A literature search was initiated through Westfornt. This search concentrated on writings or research that would pertain to this subject. An extensive review of available literature and documented research revealed nothing directly pertinent to this specific subject.

Chapter 3, METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted in three phases.

1.

In the first phase an investigation of literature was performed with the objectives of:

1. Determining the reasons for people to form groups in the pursuit of recreation.
2. If group formation reflects a condition in society in general that could affect how recreation opportunities should be managed.

This investigation was pursued through a review of literature in two college level libraries, Oregon Institute of Technology and Southern Oregon State College, and through Westfornt. Emphasis in this review was directed in the subject areas of sociology, political science and outdoor recreation.

Information pertaining to this specific subject area could generously be stated as sparse. Some authors touched on this aspect of group behavior (formation) as part of studies in a broader context. The few references found provided some basis for making deductions concerning formations of groups, trends that may be developing for group affiliation and growth of group recreation in the outdoor environment.

2.

The second phase in this endeavor was to confirm the need for group recreation opportunities locally on the Klamath Ranger District. A review of documented and hearsay evidence was conducted.

Camping

The district began receiving formal requests for group camping facilities in the 1970's. Requests appeared to be more numerous and frequent in the 1980's.

Campground hosts at Lake of the Woods documented sixteen requests for group camping facilities during July and August of 1985. Hosts and Forest Service personnel reported many more undocumented requests. Ten requests were for groups of 15 to 30 in size, three for groups greater than 30 and three for groups less than 15. The types of groups were mainly multiple family, retirees or composed of people with similar interests. There are no group camping facilities in this area.

A similar level of requests was received during 1986. Additionally, during the season, requests for equestrian oriented camping facilities for groups of 30 to 50 people were received.

Winter Sports

Since 1983, snowmobile and, to a lesser extent, skier groups have requested facilities oriented to the pursuit of these activities for groups of 10 to 30 and more. Facilities included parking, sanitation and backcountry overnight shelters. These groups have become active on issues, such as, support for new snowpark development, toilet facilities at existing snowparks, and winter trail development.

Equestrian

Since 1983, a local equestrian group in Klamath Falls has been urging the Forest Service to consider their needs for trail riding opportunities for groups of 15-30 or more people (plus horses). They are particularly interested in opportunities that do not conflict with wilderness restrictions which are limiting some of their traditional activity.

During the summer of 1986, an informal group of equestrians from the Medford-Rogue Valley area organized partially in response to the limitation of their traditional use of a trailhead after it was reconstructed by the Forest Service.

3.

The third phase in this study is to identify specific sites on the Klamath Ranger District suitable for various types of group recreation uses.

A brief study was conducted during the 1984 season by field personnel to identify potential sites in the Lake of the Woods/Fish Lake area that would be suitable for group camping. Eight sites were identified.

During the summer of 1986 a search for a site for large groups suitable for equestrian as well as general camping use was conducted. Three sites were identified: Spencer Creek, Fourmile Lake and Big Meadow. Selection of a specific site to be developed would be made considering the site attributes, potential for conflict with other recreationists, potential effects upon nearby wilderness areas and the variety of opportunities available.

Chapter 4, DISCUSSION

1. Situation.

A trailhead reconstruction project was completed at Cold Springs on the Klamath Ranger District during the summer of 1986. Reconstruction improved traffic control, parking and site protection from indiscriminate vehicle use. Upon completion of the project, the district received complaints from horse owners of the Medford-Rogue Valley area of Oregon. They had formerly used this site in informal groups but now could not as the improvements limited parking for higher numbers of large vehicles and trailers. The complainants formed a group that presented a protest to the Forest Service. A key priority for this group was to secure an area in which they could camp together with others pursuing horse use oriented recreation. To this end they stated a willingness to contribute resources and labor to construction of facilities for this purpose.

During the past three years, horse owners in Klamath Falls have expressed concern with the Forest Service management of wilderness areas. Recent legislation has established a new wilderness area on the district and there has been a general effort to manage wilderness areas to a high standard. Restrictions established to protect and restore wilderness values often limit traditional access, group size and freedom to locate campsites. Many horse users seem to fear that these restrictions reflected an effort to exclude them from using these areas. They expressed their concerns and recommendations to the Forest Service through a local equestrian club. This club has become more active in recent years in pursuit of their desires on National Forest lands.

For some years the district has participated in a forum of winter sports organizations to assist in developing or managing winter recreation opportunities and resolving various problems that occur with these types of activities. Participants include ski clubs, snowmobile clubs, resort owners and others. Members have presented proposals for U.S. Forest Service or other agency consideration, assisted in trail and snowpark development, and worked together to resolve conflicts.

For several years the district has been receiving requests for group overnight camping facilities at Forest Service developed recreation sites in the vicinity of Lake-of-the-Woods. Examination of requests disclosed that a wide variety of groups were represented, including retiree organizations, cycling and running clubs, company groups, religious organizations, community clubs and family or class reunions. All wanted to camp in a group and desired a natural setting for their recreation. Group size usually was from 15 to 30.

Public interest in group recreation on the Klamath Ranger District falls into two categories:

1. Groups that are requesting facilities and opportunities for group recreation use.

2. Groups that are forming in response to Forest Service management action that affect recreation opportunities that they have utilized or want to utilize.

The first category of groups represents a public need or desire for facilities, primarily camping at Lake-of-the-Woods and other associated activities. There has been no involvement with the Forest Service other than for information or routine administration.

The second category represents groups that also are requesting facilities and opportunities. But they are additionally actively engaged with the Forest Service in pursuit of their desires. Their involvement has helped to define their needs, promoted their proposals and provided a source of volunteer assistance to the district.

These situations raise several questions regarding group recreation on National Forest lands. Is there a trend towards people recreating in groups? Is the Forest Service neglecting groups in providing outdoor recreation opportunities? How should the requests for group recreation be managed?

2. Considerations.

- Social Dynamics -

One purpose of this project is to determine if group recreation activity is a social trend that has implications for Forest Service management. Based on data and the literature investigated for this effort, it cannot be established that there is or is not such a trend. It may be that group recreation is more or less a constant percent of the total recreation need and its growth is responsive to the total growth of recreation. However, agency actions may influence the formation of recreation user groups.

Based on a review of literature and the district situation, some assumptions can be made concerning the nature, formation and needs of groups in outdoor recreation. The writing of Zander, Cartwright and Shaw indicate that people associate in groups for several basic purposes. Those purposes that appear most appropriate for recreation on National Forest lands are:

1. Groups provide an opportunity to fulfill a basic need in many people; the need to affiliate with other human beings. This is particularly so where common interests can be shared.
2. Groups often form in response to the actions or inaction of large organizations that have influence on members interests.
3. Groups are more effective than individuals in accomplishing certain goals and objectives.

Apparantly, there often is an attraction for people to affiliate with other people. Using a concept from Murphy's writings, it could be hypothesized that the existence of the "Mass Society" with its remoteness and alienation between individuals is causing a search for a more meaningful social community. This situation could encourage people to seek social contact in groups, especially for recreation. For them, association in groups provides beneficial relationships and strength to resolve social problems.

Common recreation interests among people encourages them to recreate together in groups. Organizing for common interest has improved the effectiveness of participants to expand winter sports opportunities on the Klamath Ranger District. Interaction as groups with administering agencies establishes a stronger basis for cooperative efforts with those agencies. Operating in this manner, groups are more successful in promoting improvements that favor their activities, such as development of a winter trail system for snowmobilers. They also provide a pool of skills and volunteer labor for maintenance and facility development.

- Forest Service Policy -

The Forest Service policy emphasis often appears biased towards directing and providing recreation opportunities for individuals and single family groups. Recreation for larger, organized groups is often discouraged. On the Klamath Ranger District, organization sites occupying National Forest land under special use authorization provide almost all opportunities for large group recreation. This is seldom a satisfactory opportunity for group recreation as the prescriptive programs and facilities of these organizations often do not satisfy the needs of other recreation groups.

The Forest Service needs to consider that affiliation in groups for recreation represents a significant social need and perhaps a trend. Many groups desire outdoor recreation opportunities that require the same settings in the natural environment and large land area as individuals require. More balance in the Forest Service recreation program could be achieved if these particular needs are addressed. Consideration for group recreation should be a part of the total mix of recreation opportunities that are analyzed, planned and provided.

The agency should also be aware that its management action, even if correct, can encourage the formation of groups. Reconstruction projects that limit parking for horse hauling vehicles and imposition of small, rigid group size and limited encounter restrictions in wilderness areas have definitely stimulated the formation and activity of equestrian groups. The same is true for skiers and snowmobilers when they see the Forest Service making decisions that impose limitations on their opportunities or not taking the action that they see as needed to preserve or promote their opportunity.

The Forest Service should not be afraid to initiate management actions that encourage the formation of groups. This may be the only way a contact can be developed with the public to stimulate their involvement and assistance. In the case of the response to trailhead construction by equestrian groups, it may be beneficial. Even though adversity occurred, the recreation needs of a certain group were recognized and received consideration.

3. Action.

Another purpose of this study is to develop recommendations for management for group recreation opportunities on the Klamath Ranger District. Three needs for group recreation opportunities are occurring. They are camping at Lake-of-the-Woods, camping facilities for horse owner groups and expansion of winter sports facilities to accommodate the larger groups using them.

A clearly identified need for a group recreation facility, is at Lake-of-the-Woods for overnight camping. This has been reinforced by repeated requests from the public in recent years. A field study has been completed to identify suitable sites. A site suitable for a 30 to 50 person-sized group should be selected and scheduled for construction in the Forest Capital investment program. This will be accomplished by August 31, 1987.

A second identified need is for facilities for overnight camping and a corresponding trail system outside wilderness for equestrian groups. Three potential sites have been identified. Again, a site should be selected and scheduled for construction in the capital investment program. There is an opportunity to utilize volunteer labor, skills and materials in this situation. Criteria for selection of a site will be developed by July 1, 1987 and a site selection and scheduling will be completed by August 31, 1987.

A third need is for facilities for group winter sports activity. Facilities needed include expansion of the snowpark system, winter trail system, toilet facilities and overnight shelters. This need should be further defined and facilities again scheduled for construction in the capital investment program. Definition can be obtained through development of a winter sports plan that includes the Winema and Rogue River National Forests. This is scheduled for accomplishment in Fiscal Year 1988. This plan would coordinate management efforts between forests, schedule management actions and include a capital investment program.

Finally, land allocations and management direction in the forest plan being prepared must be examined and confirmed or revised as a prelude to the above three recommendations. This is scheduled to be accomplished by June 30, 1987.

Chapter 5, SUMMARY

This study was initiated to analyze the growth and interest for facilities and opportunities for group recreation on the Klamath Ranger District. The study basically addressed two subjects:

1. Determine if the growth in demand for group recreation opportunities is a trend representing a social change that the Forest Service must consider in planning and management.
2. Identify the needs and opportunities for group recreation on the Klamath Ranger District.

There was not enough evidence revealed that can firmly indicate a social trend or change towards more group recreation activity. However, investigation did suggest that group activity, such as group recreation, fulfills certain human needs for affiliation and successful pursuit of common interests. This does not appear to be clearly recognized in the formulation of Forest Service policy or for local management of wildland recreation opportunities. Forest Service management places emphasis on providing public recreation opportunities on National Forests for individual or small group experience. A truly balanced program would include provision for larger, organized groups where a large landbase in a natural setting is needed for their activity.

Investigation also suggests that agency actions can cause groups to form when people view these actions as a threat to their favored recreation activity. Participation in these groups is enhanced by common interests of participants and strengthens bonds of affiliation between them. Eventually, group growth and interest leads to a need for areas and facilities for enlarged group activity.

The Forest Service can build on the interest of various recreation groups. It is easier to maintain close contact with the land-using public through forums and conferences in which agency and groups participate together to address the management of the recreation resources. Organized groups are also a source of low cost, enthusiastic assistance in program implementation.

Several recommendations were made for management of group oriented recreation needs on the Klamath Ranger District. They include development of a group campground at Lake-of-the-Woods, a group facility that would accommodate equestrian groups on the district and improvement of winter sports facilities.

They are:

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>
Group campsite at Lake-of-the-Woods:	
Select site and schedule in capital investment program	August 31, 1987
Equestrian/large groups campsite:	
Select site and schedule in capital investment program.	August 31, 1987
Winter Sports Plan: Complete	September 30, 1988
Forest Plan: Review and incorporate recommendations	June 30, 1987

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APPENDIX

1. District Map

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